TA Performance Survey Clarifications through Frequently Asked Questions

(Taken from July 26, 2019, Community Compass TA Quarterly Update)

Since launching TA Performance Surveys, HUD has received questions and has also made some updates to implementation. Please review the Q&As below for clarification and guidance.

Question: Regarding Training surveys, what is the naming convention for the survey name for HUD User and how important is it to use the convention?

- It is very important to follow the Training survey naming convention. This will expedite report creation and dissemination to TA Providers and assist with differentiating trainings that are often repeated. The convention is as follows:
    - Training Topic – Training Location (City, State) – Training Date (Month, Day, Year)
    - Example: Financial Management – Chicago, IL – December 5, 2107

Question: Can you explain HUD's final interpretation of the 'data aggregation' requirement as mentioned in the survey PRA in reference to how survey data may be shared outside of HUD?

- Though we had previously planned to provide aggregated data for any surveys that had received 10 or more responses, we have recently revised our approach to ensure we are able to provide more robust information to you and HUD staff. We will now provide aggregated data for any surveys that received more than one response. This means TA Providers will receive feedback on training surveys (pre and post surveys) when there is more than 1 respondent for each (or in other words, where there is 2 or more respondents). For TA Surveys, TA Providers will receive feedback in aggregate for TA engagements when 2 surveys are available to share. The data aggregation requirement is in effect until HUD obtains an updated or new PRA for our surveys. CCTA will undertake obtaining the new PRA 2019/2020 timeframe with the intent to remove the aggregation language from the PRA cover page for CCTA surveys. This shift in interpretation will allow greater information flow to the TA Providers.

Question: Can you give us an update on any efforts by HUD program offices to streamline or consolidate required surveys?

- The Community Compass Team (CCTA) and ONAP have been working together to transition ONAP TA awardees to using the centralized, standardized HUD CCTA surveys for training and direct TA. The commonality of the surveys as they are now being used as well as the need to update the CCTA Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) approval make this an opportune time to combine the two and add to the CCTA elements from the ONAP survey not currently in the CCTA surveys. All CCTA participating programs are required to use the standard surveys immediately, including ONAP. As HUD updates the PRA, items from the previous ONAP surveys will be incorporated so that the data collected continues to be valuable.

Question: Reports. When will we get some reports?

- With a relaxed data aggregation requirement now behind us, HUD is ready to send reports. CCTA has been working on resolving issues with reporting and training data gathered since March 2018 will be sent to awardees and program staff soon (in next few weeks) and from thereon will be much timelier now that automated reports are in place. (Update – Reports are being sent out to TA Providers as of 6/13/19).

Question: Please explain the TA Provider's exact responsibility in regard to response rates to surveys initiated and sent (to training participants, TA recipients via HUD User)?

- TA Awardees will NOT be adversely affected/penalized based on response rates of others to surveys they initiate and send. Awardees are required to initiate and send surveys, but we do not penalize the awardee if respondents do not complete them. It is voluntary for training participants and TA recipients to complete the surveys we send.

Question: My firm has been strategizing on how best to comply and implement TA surveys into our programming and processes. As discussions ensued, we continue to generate questions related to TA surveys that, admittingly, are rare scenarios, but are not addressed in the issued guidance. How do we best address these types of scenarios?

- For TA engagements or scenarios that don't fit a particular mold or are not specifically addressed in the issued guidance, HUD expects TA Providers and their HUD program contacts, in consultation with the GTR, to figure out the best way to effectively survey the engagement. The guidance addresses the most common scenarios and acknowledges that rare scenarios will require some original thinking and planning. In addition to discussing with your HUD program POC and GTR, be sure to document the TA survey plan and any barriers or constraints in the work plan Scope tab. Logic and everyday reason should prevail in developing your TA survey plan. HUD's overarching goal is to survey as many engagements as we can and to utilize the results to improve the CCTA program and share data with TA Providers so they can improve their TA. Reach out to David Larimer (david.m.larimer@hud.gov) in TAD if you require additional support.

Question: When will Product Development work plans require a TA Survey?

- Soon. When the TA Survey Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) is updated by June 2020, Product Development work plans will begin to be surveyed in the TA Portal along with Direct TA, On-Call, Needs Assessment and Regional Outreach work plans.

Question: Does the work plan (or Task) need to be marked as "complete" in the TA Portal prior to issuing the Survey?

- No, you do not need to mark a task or work plan as complete before initiating a survey. Any approved or complete Direct TA, Needs Assessment, On-Call, or Regional Outreach work plan can initiate surveys if the work plan has utilized HUD standardized outcomes.

Question: Can the TA survey ask if there were other unanticipated outcomes that were achieved?

- Good idea. Unfortunately, not at this time as the question was not covered in our existing PRA approval. However, we will consider it when we update the PRA for the CCTA surveys.

Question: How do you edit before you "confirm and send" - the only other option is "cancel". Does that cancel the sending or cancel the survey? Can you change the language from "cancel" to "cancel send"?

- In order to make edits from the "Confirm and Send" screen, you need to first click "Cancel." This does not cancel the entire survey. Clicking "Cancel" brings you back to the Surveys tab, where there is an "Edit or Add Recipients" button to make additional edits.

Question: Do we survey when we are ending one phase of TA and moving to the next phase?

- Generally speaking, the answer is no. The CCTA team suggests the TA Provider and HUD staff ask questions the following types of questions to guide their planning:

  - Is the TA engagement over? (if no, then don’t survey)
  - Are you continuing to provide TA? (if yes, then don’t survey)
  - Is the recipient expecting additional TA? (if yes, then don’t survey)

  There may be situations where a phase could be surveyed but that would not be common. A rare scenario where surveying a phase is the best option may include phases that are highly discrete, chronologically separated, involve different recipients or points-of-contact within the recipient organization, or if the phases are in separate work plans and other factors already mentioned are also at play. If it was ever best and appropriate to survey a phase, document the logic and plan in the scope tab. Don’t overthink this. Logic and everyday reason should prevail. Involve your HUD POC and GTR in your thinking, as noted above.

Question: Do we survey when we are administratively changing Cooperative Agreements due to funds being depleted? The TA recipient won’t know that we have changed funding sources and the Outcomes and Tasks remain the same.

- No. If an engagement utilizes multiple awards for any reason, we don’t want to survey each award, only the engagement and approved outcomes. If multiple awards or work plans are used, document the survey plan in each (e.g. This TA engagement is funded using multiple awards (list them). The survey will be issued from XYZ award. There is an option in the Portal for the GTR to select that surveys are not applicable to this award.

Question: Do we survey a TA recipient at the end of an On Call assignment if the TA is being escalated to Direct TA due to the need to address larger or systemic issues?

- When an On Call engagement that is escalated to Direct TA, a TA survey should not be initiated. If the outcome description mentioned an increase in ability or better understanding of something, a reasonable person can conclude if TA is escalated after On-Call, the recipient probably would not respond favorably to the survey in most cases, even if the TA was good. Survey plans can be documented in the Scope tab in the TA Portal when there are multiple collaborating TA Providers. If an On Call task is not going to be surveyed for a good reason, document it in the work plan and discuss with your program POC and GTR.

Question: Do we survey TA recipients under an On Call assignment who are non-responsive or identify that they are not ready for TA at this time – but the Outcomes are known to have not been achieved?

- No, we would not want to survey these On Call tasks. Document such cases in the Scope tab or in the task.

Question: We also wanted to confirm that there has not been any additional guidance for surveys related to webinars, conferences, or self-paced on line training.

- No additional guidance yet.

Question: Does the TA Provider have to be the TA grantee? For example, several assignments, the primary point of contact with the community is a subcontractor/consultant – but they aren’t in the dropdown menu. Can we over-ride the system somehow?

- If a subcontractor or consultant is providing the TA, for the purposes of the TA survey, those individuals should be considered as associated with your TA Provider organization. Therefore, no additional selections would be made under “Other TA Providers” and in the Survey Recipients section, the subcontractor/consultant can be listed under the TA Provider section.